

*Thornton
Speech**201701***A STATESMANLIKE SPEECH**

Sir Henry Thornton's first public appearance in Canada will add to his reputation as a railway executive of a high order. His speech at the Montreal board of trade gathering indicated qualities befitting the position of great responsibility he has come to fill. Details of his plans, if he has any, could not be expected of him at the present time. It is only necessary that in undertaking his duties he should have a clear grasp of the fundamental elements of it, and this his speech demonstrates he possesses.

The speech is well worth reading. Reference need be made to only three principal points in it. His main job, he emphasized, is to get rid of the deficits on the operation of the National system. That is fundamental, of course, and his optimism that this could be accomplished without too great delay is a cheering sign.

On the question of politics entering into the administration of the National lines his words were as emphatic as they well could be. He has been given a free hand by the Premier, Rt. Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, and he intends to take full advantage of it so far as resisting any efforts to introduce political advantage into the consideration of railway problems is concerned. His words indicated a fair understanding that there would be not only direct appeals from those seeking political advantage, but insidious attempts to bring railway development under political control. His determination to resist both to the limit of his ability is a good augury of a fair future for the National system.

On the question of immigration also his words were wisely chosen. He understands clearly that the future of the National lines as well as the future of the whole country are bound up to a considerable degree in the immigration policy the country may adopt, and he indicated a desire to make the railways a potent factor in the development of an immigration scheme. His reference to and support of the recent speech by Lord Shaughnessy on this subject is gratifying to the country at large, because Lord Shaughnessy's speech dealt with the essentials of the situation as regards immigration in a manner that would be difficult to improve upon.

All in all it was a statesmanlike utterance, introducing Sir Henry to the country under the happiest auspices, and assuring him the support of the people in his initial efforts.